

Polypharmacy: Use of Multiple Anticholinergic Medications in Older Adults (Poly-ACH)

By working together, we can improve health outcomes for your patients, our members. Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA) measures are used to assess prescription drug plans' quality and performance. Appropriate medication use measures are developed by the PQA and endorsed by the National Quality Forum. This tip sheet provides key details of the PQA measure for Polypharmacy: Use of Multiple Anticholinergic Medications in Older Adults (Poly-ACH).

What Is the Measure?

The measure is defined by the percentage of members 65 years of age or older with concurrent use of two or more unique anticholinergic (ACH) medications during the measurement period.

The use of multiple anticholinergics in older adults is associated with an increased risk of cognitive decline.

The percentage is calculated with concurrent use of two or more ACH medications during the measurement period.

Exclusions

- Members in hospice during the measurement year.

Denominator

Eligible Population: Members 65 years or older, with at least two prescription claims with unique dates of service of the same medication in the targeted drug classes of ACH during the measurement period.

Numerator

Members with two or more anticholinergic medications filled on two different dates of service during the measurement period.

Note: A lower rate indicates better performance.

References

- PQAAlliance.org/Measures-Overview#Poly-ACH
- CMS.gov/Files/Document/2025-Star-Ratings-Technical-Notes.pdf